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Prevention of armed conflict: strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution

The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 29 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine regarding the steps taken to alert the tribunal established under annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in the arbitration instituted by Ukraine against the Russian Federation to Russia's aggravation of the situation in the Kerch Strait, the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 34 (b) and 67, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 29 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine regarding the steps taken to alert the tribunal established under annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in the arbitration instituted by Ukraine against the Russian Federation to Russia's aggravation of the situation in the Kerch Strait, the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea

27 November 2018

Ukraine today took steps to alert the international tribunal that is considering Russia's violations of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in the Black Sea, Sea of Azov, and Kerch Strait, of recent actions by Russia that have significantly aggravated the parties' dispute.

In a letter submitted to the tribunal, Ukraine described Russia's ongoing pattern of harassment against Ukrainian and international vessels seeking to transit the Kerch Strait and navigate to Mariupol, Berdyansk, and other Ukrainian ports.

Russia's actions effectively closed the Kerch Strait to all vessels, resulting in protests not only by Ukraine, but also by authorities representing other Black Sea littoral States, including the European Union and Turkey, which both insisted on freedom of passage through the Strait.

Russia's latest actions, including firing and seizure of Ukrainian naval vessels, mark a serious escalation of a months'-long pattern, in which vessels flagged both to Ukraine and to third states have repeatedly faced obstacles to navigation, including extended stops that have caused significant economic losses. Only vessels heading to Ukrainian ports have been affected by such stops; vessels bound for Russian ports in the Sea of Azov have not reported similar interference.

Ukraine has protested Russia's actions, has raised them with its allies and, through this latest action, has demonstrated its intent to challenge Russia's conduct through appropriate legal means.